

IN THE CLAIMS

Please rewrite the claims to read as follows:

sub c<sup>1</sup> --9. (Amended) A process for the production of plants with improved growth characteristics, which comprises the following steps:

- B<sup>1</sup>
- a) transfer and integration of a DNA sequence coding for a prokaryotic asparagine synthetase in the plant genome.
  - b) wherein said DNA sequence is linked to a regulatory sequence for the expression of said DNA sequence and import of the asparagine synthetase into the chloroplast and/or plastids of a plant cell and wherein said plant cell exhibits the biochemical activity of the imported asparagine synthetase in its chloroplasts and/or plastids and
  - c) transfer and integration of a DNA sequence encoding a chloroplastic GS-antisense RNA in the plant genome
  - d) wherein the DNA sequence under c) is linked to a regulatory sequence for the transcription of said DNA sequence and
  - [c] e) regeneration of intact and fertile plants from the transformed cells.

Please cancel claim 10, without prejudice;

sub c<sup>2</sup> 11. (Amended) A plant cell [according to claim 10] obtainable by a method as claimed in claim 9, wherein a prokaryotic ammonium specific asparagine synthetase exhibits the biochemical activity of the imported asparagine synthetase in its chloroplasts and/or plastids and which contains a gene construct [providing] which provides a reduced level of expression of endogenous glutamine synthetase activity.

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12. (Amended) A plant, seeds, ~~propagule or propagation material~~  
containing cells according to claim [10] 11.

13. (Not amended) A gene construct comprising a gene encoding a prokaryotic ammonium specific asparagine synthetase operatively linked to a regulatory sequence for the expression of said gene and import of the asparagine synthetase into the chloroplasts and/or plastids of a plant cell and wherein said plant cell exhibits the biochemical activity of the imported asparagine synthetase in its chloroplasts and/or plastids.

14. (Not amended) A gene construct according to claim 13, wherein the asparagine synthetase gene is an E. coli asparagine synthetase gene with a chloroplastic leader peptide at its N-terminus.

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15. (Amended) A vector containing a gene construct according to claim [13] 14  
which gene construct comprises a sequence which encodes a chloroplastic leader peptide at its N-terminus.

16. (Amended) A plant cell transformed with the gene construct according to claim 13 or with vector according to claim 15. --.

#### REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.17(a) and 1.136(a), a three-month extension from **August 11, 2000** up to and including to **November 11, 2000**, to respond to the May 11, 2000 Office Action. Enclosed herewith is a check in the amount of \$870.00 in payment of the fee therefor. Any deficient or overpayment should be charged or credited to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

The instant invention relates to improving plant growth by expression of at least one bacterial asparagine synthetase in the chloroplast and/or plastid of cells of the plant. The